



Dr. M. Joseph George
center founder

Hills physician to head Livonia Family Practice

Dr. M. Joseph George of Farmington Hills has opened the new American Family Care Center, Livonia. George is the founder and medical director of the center.

George received his bachelor's degree in chemistry from Wayne State University and his medical degree from the University of Granada, Granada, Spain. He finished an internship, a residency in internal medicine, and a critical care fellowship all at Providence Hospital in Southfield.

He has concentrated his practice on emergency and internal medicine, urgent care and as a family practitioner. He holds appointments at several Michigan hospitals and is

on staff at St. Mary's Hospital in Livonia and Pontiac General Hospital in Pontiac.

George is the director of the Advanced Cardiac Life Support at St. Mary's Hospital, which is affiliated with the American Heart Association. He is on the board of the National Free Standing Ambulatory Care Centers.

He holds memberships in the Oakland County Medical Society and the Michigan State Medical Society as well as several specialty medical groups in his field.

American Family Care Center is at 19900 Haggerty, Livonia, just west of I-75 and south of Eight Mile.

Schools act to manage asbestos Steps taken to remove PCB also

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Farmington is one of the few school districts that has filed an asbestos abatement plan and is moving ahead to clean up a potentially toxic problem, according to a recent study from Washington, D.C.

The local district has also taken steps on its own to remove potential PCB contamination from school light ballasts, a project that officials expect will be completed by January. Such PCB removal is not mandated.

More than one-third of Michigan school districts — and more than a fifth of the nation's schools — appear to be disregarding federally mandated asbestos management requirements. Another one-third, nationally, have filed for permission to delay compliance.

Farmington began asbestos inspections less than four months after mandates were handed down in December 1987. It filed a management plan for asbestos abatement this fall. The district is one of only 21 percent in Michigan that filed plans. These not complying are subject to fines.

"WE WANTED it done, and done right," said Lynn Nutter, Farmington schools assistant superintendent

who coordinated the effort. "We think we're on track."

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, or AHERA, required all public and private school districts to inspect buildings and submit to the governor, by Oct. 12, plans to manage asbestos in the buildings. Congress amended the law in September to permit school authorities to seek a year's delay.

Nutter estimates the district will complete most of the asbestos abatement during this school year, and will save \$70,000 to \$100,000 in the process.

By getting the work done now, the district will avoid the rush that is bound to come from districts behind in complying and have to postpone their work until next summer.

The Farmington school district has also addressed another potentially toxic problem during the past few months — removal of PCB, or polychlorinated biphenyl. The school board directed administrators to immediately get the light ballasts replaced, some of which were leaking liquids that could have contained the potentially toxic chemical.

THE PCB issue was raised separately by concerned parents who had heard about incidents at Longacre Elementary and other schools. The

asbestos issue has been ongoing for several years; this is the second federal mandate to try and rectify the problem.

Although asbestos has not been permitted in buildings constructed since 1978, it was used in millions of structures built since the 1930s, including school buildings. In airborne form, asbestos fibers can cause lung cancer and other diseases as long as 40 years after exposure. In 1984, the Environmental Protection Agency estimated that 30,000 school buildings, roughly a third of the nation's total, could contain breathable asbestos.

The current law does not require removal of all asbestos from schools. Experts and EPA officials say the best thing to do about material that is in good shape and not shedding fibers may be simply periodic inspections. A badly managed removal job may pose more danger than leaving asbestos in place.

ACCORDING TO the federal survey sponsored by Kaselahn & D'Angelo Associates of Haddon Heights, N.J., 24 states are unable to deter-

mine which districts are complying with the law. Kaselahn & D'Angelo hired MWW Strategic Communications of River Edge, N.J., to survey state school authorities by telephone from Nov. 1-10.

Robert Sommer, senior vice president of MWW and former aide to U.S. Rep. James Florio, D-N.J., a principal sponsor of the asbestos law, said he believed the results provided by the 26 responding states and the District of Columbia could be taken as representative of the nation as a whole, since 70 percent of all schools are in those states.

"I suspect things are worse" in the non-responding 24, added Sommer. The results show "there are problems with the law that need to be corrected before we move on to commercial buildings."

Kemron Environmental Services of Farmington Hills is handling asbestos inspections, containment and necessary removal in the Farmington schools.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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